

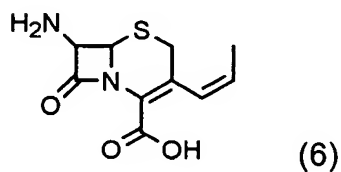
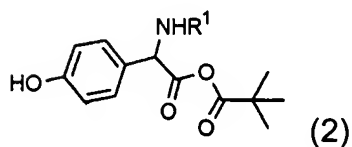
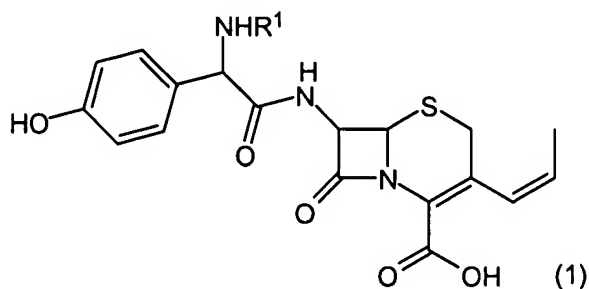
Amendments to the Abstract:

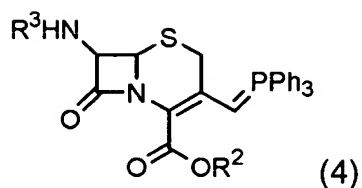
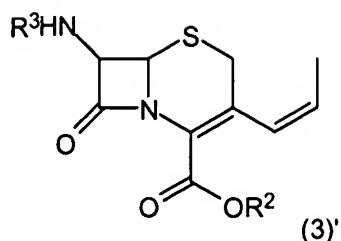
Please replace the current abstract with the following abstract:

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Provided is a process for preparing a compound of formula 1 or its salt, which comprises reacting a compound represented by the following formula 4 with acetaldehyde in a mixed solvent comprising water, isopropanol, and methylenechloride in a volume ratio of 1:3-6:11-14 in the presence of a first base to stereospecifically prepare a compound represented by the following formula 3'; and

reacting the compound of the formula 3' with an anhydrous compound represented by the following formula 2 in the presence of a second base:





wherein R^1 is a hydrogen or an amino protecting group, R^2 is a hydrogen or a carboxyl protecting group, and R^3 is a hydrogen or an amino protecting group consisting of phenylacetyl group,

wherein when R^3 is a phenylacetyl group, R^2 is not a hydrogen in formula 3'; and

wherein, when at least one of R^2 and R^3 is a protecting group, all such protecting groups are removed from formula 3', thereby producing a compound represented by formula 6 prior to reacting it with the compound of formula 2.